

# 5 *Chapter 5*

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### The Framework in Action



## 5.1 Implementation Plan

### Making the Framework a Reality

#### Strategic Partners in Conservation Education include:

- Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- Winooski Valley Park District
- UVM Natural Areas Center
- Lake Champlain Basin Science Center
- Branch-Out Burlington!
- Burlington Schools
- Lake Champlain Committee
- VT Institute for Natural Science
- VT Housing & Conservation Board

As described in Chapter 4, this Plan outlines a series of recommendations aimed towards achieving long-term protection for Burlington's most important natural areas and open spaces. For this Plan and vision to become a reality however, it will take the careful and thoughtful coordination of the recommendations proposed, adequate and ongoing financial support, and the support of a wide range of individuals and organizations.

This Chapter outlines a series of actions necessary to implement key recommendations of this Plan, and suggest strategic partners. Following each action are tasks that are necessary for the successful completion of the action.

**Educate people about the important resources found throughout the community and how they improve our quality of life.**

1. Create a standing committee of the Conservation Board that will be charged with developing and implementing an **ongoing conservation education program**. This committee should include representatives from other interested organizations and individuals with skills and interests to offer from outside the Board to broaden the Committee's capacity and capabilities.

2. The Conservation Board should develop an **annual work plan and budget for conservation education** initiatives to be funded by the City Council as part of the annual City budgeting process. Increased funding to the Conservation Board will be necessary for additional staff time and direct expenses related to educational programs - some, but not all of which may come from the proposed Conservation Fund.

3. Work with the UVM School of Natural Resources, the Environmental Program and the Natural Areas Center to **share information and provide internship opportunities** for students to develop and carry out conservation education programs.

4. Develop **collaborative working relationships** with other organizations dedicated to conservation education.

5. Organize a series of **ongoing education programs** such as:

- a) Organize an annual Earth Day event and program.
- b) Re-establish the annual Photo Contest.
- c) Collaborate with Branch-Out Burlington! on projects such as the "Awesome Tree Contest" and the *Tree Walk* brochures.
- d) Provide educational programs in local schools.
- e) Offer seasonal Interpretive Walks and Tours.
- f) Develop outreach products such as publications, interpretive guides, maps, newsletters, or a web site.

6. Identify and **work with owners of properties** that possess important conservation and recreational value about measures they can take to protect and manage these sites. Educate them about the important resources on their property, the benefit they provide the community, and things they can do as stewards of these resources. Recognize these private stewards for the service they are providing the community.

**Provide a legacy of lands set aside for conservation and passive recreation to benefit future generations.**

#### Capacity Building...

1. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Conservation Board and the Dept. of Parks and Recreation regarding the creation of a **Conservation**

**Legacy Program**, and the oversight and stewardship of property held by the City for conservation and passive recreational purposes. This MOU should provide a framework for collaboration between the Dept. of Parks and Recreation and the Conservation Board that seeks to best match the responsibilities, skills and capabilities of both.

This MOU should address the following issues at a minimum:

- Creation of a distinct city land conservation program designed to provide long-term protection for Burlington's significant natural and recreational assets.
- Oversight and management of a local conservation fund.
- Oversight and management responsibilities for city-owned lands set aside for conservation and passive recreational purposes.
- Acquisition and stewardship planning responsibilities for city-owned lands set aside for conservation and passive recreational purposes.
- Annual work plans and budgets for land conservation initiatives to be funded as part of the annual City budgeting process. Increased funding to the either the Parks & Recreation Dept. or the Conservation Board will be necessary for additional staff time and direct expenses related to land conservation initiatives.

2. Collaborate with the UVM School of Natural Resources, the Environmental Program and the Natural Areas Center to share information and resources, and provide internship opportunities for program students. This is a source of expertise for management planning, conservation education, and seasonal staffing.

4. With assistance from the Dept. of Planning & Zoning, develop and maintain the information necessary to monitor land use and development trends within the city and assess its impact on Burlington's significant natural and recreational assets. Information needs include: land use and land cover, periodic aerial photography (including orthophotography at a minimum scale of 1:1,250), surface water, slope, recreational trails, and wildlife habitats and corridors. All of this information will be used as aids in keeping the Open Space Inventory current.

### **Purchase ...**

1. By resolution of the Burlington City Council, and perhaps a City Charter change, establish a "**Burlington Conservation Fund.**" Such a fund must be capable of receiving monies from a variety of public and private sources, and should provide an annual report of its activities.

2. Identify and approve a source of local funding to annually invest in the proposed Fund. These funds should be used to leverage other sources of funding including state and federal grants and appropriations, and private donations. Options that should receive the greatest consideration are: a dedicated property tax and a real estate transfer tax.

3. Maintain a reference list of private, state, and federal funding sources to support acquisition, planning, and management activities. At a minimum, this should include the VT Community Foundation and other private foundations, VT Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and individual donation.

4. Develop a marketing and outreach strategy to be used in soliciting appropriations, grants, and donations to the Fund. One option to consider is "rounding-up" a property tax and/or utility bill where the customer can choose to round up the invoice amount to the nearest \$1 with the additional payment going directly to the Fund.

**Strategic Partners in Program Development include:**

- Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- Dept. of Planning & Zoning
- Burlington Planning Commission
- City Attorney's Office
- VT Housing & Conservation Board
- Trust For Public Land
- UVM Natural Areas Center
- Local and regional land trusts

Strategic Partners in Financing include:

- Board of Finance
- Mayor and City Treasurer
- City Attorney's Office
- VT Housing & Conservation Board
- Trust For Public Land
- Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- Local and Regional Land Trusts

## Encourage Voluntary Donations...

1. Identify property owners who may be interested in making permanent gifts of land or conservation easements to public agencies and qualified private nonprofits to ensure their long-term protection.
2. Develop information and educational materials regarding the tax benefits associated with the donation of land to government and non-profits.
3. Collaborate with non-profit organizations and land trusts that may be willing to provide assistance and hold easements or property for conservation purposes.

## Prioritize...

1. Finalize a decision-making process regarding evaluating conservation projects for possible purchase from willing land-owners and those interested in donating land. Such an evaluation should include a detailed site analysis, a comparison of threats, possible uses and management needs, consideration of available resources, and likely protection methods.
2. Develop a protocol for approaching and negotiating with owners of properties targeted for possible acquisition. This protocol should include close coordination with the City Attorney's Office, and opportunities for collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

## Provide Economic Incentives...

1. Identify and evaluate a range of economic incentives to be offered to property owners in exchange for the protection of important conservation and recreational resources. Options for consideration may include property tax remission, management assistance, liability relief, income tax credit for permanent gifts of land or conservation easements to public agencies and qualified private nonprofits, etc. A report should be prepared with recommendations provided to the Board of Finance for consideration.

## Include open space priorities in future planning, and improve city ordinances and the Development Review Process.

1. Include major policies and programs of the *Open Space Protection Plan* in the next revision of the *Burlington Municipal Development Plan* due in June 2001.
2. Include land acquisition proposals in the City's annual Capital Improvement Program.
3. Develop a workplan and budget proposal for the development of an "Urban Greenspace Plan" for the City to address the open and greenspace needs and issues associated with the "urban open spaces."
4. Amend the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance* to expand areas within the City subject to Article 10: **Major Impact Review** (to replace the proposed Ordinance Amendment: ZA 99-01a - "Open Space Interim Zoning"). Such an amendment would add the "Significant Natural Areas" as defined in Chapter 4, and further described in Chapter 5 of this Plan, to areas within the City subject to Article 10. This would not specifically foreclose development in these areas, but would ensure a closer review for "undue adverse impacts" by the city.
5. Amend the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance* to expand the extent of the **RCO zoning district** to include significant areas and corridors identified in the inventory that are immediately adjacent to existing RCO areas and part of an important natural or recreational system.
6. Amend the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance* to include a **Buildable Area Definition** that would exclude sensitive areas from a property's density calculation. Such areas should include those inundated by water including streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands, and other bodies of water; flood plains or other areas subject to seasonal or periodic

flooding; and lands with a slope in excess of 30%. Designated growth centers and activity zones where higher density development is encouraged should be exempt.

7. Amend the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance* that would revise the **Official Map** to target sites for future public acquisition. Areas immediately adjacent to or part of an important natural or recreational system, expansion of parks and cemeteries, and high priority natural areas are examples of properties to be considered as warranted.

8. Amend the *Burlington Subdivision Ordinance* to include protections for significant natural areas and open space. This effort should be done in collaboration with the Depts. of Parks and Recreation and Public Works as part of a comprehensive re-write of the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

9. Amend the *Burlington Zoning Ordinance* to create **new Design Review Criteria** that is specific to the natural resource objectives of the RCO Design Review Districts of the city. This effort should be done in collaboration with the Design Review Board.



**Strategic Partners in Planning and Review include:**

- Planning Commission
- Zoning Board
- Design Review Board
- Department of Planning and Zoning
- City Council Ordinance Committee

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